

**MINUTES OF THE STRASBURG TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION HELD ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, AT 7 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE STRASBURG TOWN HALL.**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Boies, Vice Mayor Cherrix, and Council Members Hooser, Massoud, Monahan, Nicholson, Reynolds, Ricard, and Weaver. Absent:

Mayor Boies called the Work Session to order.

**Public Hearing:**

**1.) UDO Amendment – Short Term Rentals Ordinance**

**To receive public comment on amendments to UDO Sections 6.2 Bed and Breakfast Establishments and 7.2 Definitions to allow for Short Term Rentals in certain zoning districts.**

**P&Z Administrator Pambid** reviewed how we got to this point. This is an amendment to the UDO to allow Short Term Rentals. Currently, we only allow Bed and Breakfast, but we are now having more people request to open a short term rental. There has been public engagement with multiple public input session, including an online survey. The Planning commission and Town Council previously held public hearings on June 22 and July 13, respectively. The ordinance has gone through three legal reviews, and the Planning Commission recommended approval to the Town Council on a 6-1 vote at its September 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Points of discussion or issues included:

- Accountability, ownership/business structure
- By right (commercial) versus Special Use Permit (all residential districts)
- Housing inventory – much discussion on taking affordable housing out of the market. Most of the STR interest will be in the County; Staff does not feel it will be enough to affect the market.
- Taxation – this will allow the taxation of STR
- Performance Standards – several robust performance standards have been included and these have been reviewed by the Town Attorney.

**The Public Hearing opened at 7:06 p.m.**

Cath Stanley, 153 Signal Court, Strasburg, VA: Stated she had questions from the latest version of the ordinance that she hoped would be addressed before a vote would be taken.

**QUESTIONS ON PROPOSED UDO CHANGES**

Section 6.2.1 stated that this UDO's performance requirements are in addition to those laid out by the state and county.

- How does Shenandoah County define short term rental?
- What does the County require of Short Term Rentals?

6.2.2 A.b Is there a checklist for the life Safety Inspection performed by the County? Does such a checklist exist?

6.2.2.A.d How often will the review for compliance of all applicable performance standards in this UDO be accomplished? (Annually/bi-annually/more often?)

6.2.2.A.g.iii UDO Section 6.12 does not address noise. The noise regulations in the Town Code are onerous so hopefully as a Short Term Rental operator, we can summarize in plain language.

#### QUESTIONS ON TOWN CODE CHANGES

##### Section 78-356 - DEFINITIONS

- Why aren't Short Term Rental covered by tourist housing or even other. This section appears to be all inclusive if a person obtains money for lodging than the Transient Occupancy tax applies

##### Section 78- 262 - EXEMPTIONS

- It appears there is an exemption for houses or condo units that go through platforms such as AirBnB and VRBO to reach customers. Why were these exempt?

She felt 70.366 already addressed STR because it states that if you rent your property or any portion of your property for less than 30 days, you pay lodging tax. They pay lodging tax on their STR. Today, she read 78-262, it appears that if you go through a platform such as AirBnB, you are exempt.

They have been in business for 14 months and they have paid over \$2,000 in lodging tax.

**Council Member Massoud** asked again how much they had paid in taxes, and it was over \$2,000.

**Kim Bishop, 728 Crystal Lane, Strasburg, VA:** Stated she went to the Planning Commission meeting. She would like for Council to take into consideration when asking for a SUP, to get the views of the neighbors as to how they feel to have a STR in the neighborhood. If someone is buying homes and can come in and fix up a STR, this might take some of the inventory out and drive prices up.

**Being no other speakers, the Public Hearing closed at 7:12 p.m.**

#### Citizen comments on non-agenda items:

**Kim Bishop, 728 Crystal Lane, Strasburg, VA:** "Before I begin my comments, I want to point out that I am not personally offended by any of the businesses that I will mention and wish them much success. I simply want to point out that the rules are unfairly enforced in town.

My first comment will be on an issue that was around before I was on Council and while I was on Council which is our ordinances being complaint driven. Complaint driven rules lead to harassment, plain and simple. If people don't like a citizen, they will use the government to harass them. And perhaps when there is nothing better for the town ordinance officer to deal with than tall grass, it would be okay, but really is that our main focus? And, why is it only ONE yard that gets complained about? Yes, I am speaking of E Pearls. I don't see the hobby shop owners taking care of the tires and tall grass gracing the back of their shed or dealing with the rusting truck sitting in their parking area. I don't see Mr. Boyd or the Lutheran Church dealing with the storage container and tools and trash and tall grass sitting behind the same property. Also, there is a motor home parked in the back yard behind all these same properties not covered and not fenced in (as the ordinance states must be done). Also, the town sprays weeds with weed killer and lets it sit and die and stay. And, let's not forget that the Hi Neighbor building which was supposed to be finished three or four years ago, sits undone and containing dead critters and pigeons which poop everywhere, and the windows have still not been tended to. All this surrounding the E Pearls property. Why are they the only ones getting letters from the town? Harassment? I think so. I guess I'll have to get some citizens to write up complaints, too. Then the town can waste more resources on really unnecessary complaints. Is that what we want?

Also, sidewalk issues. Again, E Pearls has received complaints about the plants on the sidewalk.

Fair, they are right now not in compliance... HOWEVER, I could say the same about the Doggery and Lydia's and Berg Nation and the coffee shop and the brew pub. Have you tried walking down the street when there are tables in the way? Or signs sitting in the path? Or the flags hanging so low they hit you in the face? Should we get people to write up complaints about those businesses, too? Isn't it fair game? I won't even mention the window displays that are out of compliance. Yes we could keep our town very busy with complaint driven ordinances or we could make it so all issues should get letters by having the enforcement officer walk around and send everybody letters, Or, we could fix the ordinances. I mean, I honestly do not have a solution, but the harassment is real and needs to be addressed.

I'd also like to bring to your attention that our town works employees are not being used to their best potential. Since my husband's passing, I have been walking at the town trail often and am stunned at how often the grass is mowed and how much of the grass is mowed. We have underground pipes that need cameras run through them to look for cracks. We have sidewalks and curbs that need fixing. And, as a citizen and former Council person, I think infrastructure should take precedence over grass, at least as often as it gets mowed. How many public works employees have we lost recently? Maybe we should be asking why.

On a different subject, I would like to encourage you all to watch as Summit Crossing, AKA Cedarless Valley, begins development. There are strict environmental guidelines that need to be followed and since the staff is so over worked now (maybe dealing with harassing ordinances?), I would encourage you all to watch. Make sure they put up barriers to stop water erosion. Talk to the neighboring communities when they start blasting again. Just watch them. Thanks for your time."

**Action Item:**

**1.) Approval of Minutes**

**The minutes of the September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Town Council Work Session were approved as presented.**

**Discussion Item:**

**1.) UDO Amendment – Short Term Rentals Ordinance**

*Description: Consideration of public hearing comments and Planning Commission recommendation on amendments to UDO Sections 6.2 Bed and Breakfast Establishments and 7.2 Definitions to allow for Short Term Rentals in certain zoning districts.*

**Council Member Massoud** asked if other locales have ordinances about STRs and how does ours compare. **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said the genesis of ours was from the Town of New Market. **Amanda Kerns**, Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, had done significant research on other ordinances and the one we have come up with takes in many of the best components. They looked at Shenandoah and Rockingham Counties, Staunton, and Winchester.

**Council Member Massoud** asked how well New Market's was working. **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said he thinks it was approved nine to 12 months ago and he will check to see how it is going.

**Vice Mayor Cherrix** said he missed the actual definition of a STR. **Council Member Monahan** said they referenced the State Code, and it is for lodging less than 30 days. **Vice Mayor Cherrix** thinks it should be up-front in the ordinance. **Mayor Boies** said it is an addition to 6.2.2A and Vice Mayor Cherrix thought it should be specifically written out.

**P&Z Administrator Pambid** said we don't control State Code and if they were to change the definition, we would have to amend the Code. If this is passed, the current definition of State Code could be added to an information packet. **Vice Mayor Cherrix** thinks that would be

good customer service to have the definition in the packet, so the applicants do not have to search for it.

**Vice Mayor Cherrix** asked about the enforcement. If this is a personal house, we shouldn't be getting in their business of what they do with their own property.

**P&Z Administrator Pambid** said this is not a Strasburg specific question. There are ways to search through the STR data base and a register can be developed. We have two immediate vehicles for enforcement; one is complaint driven, and **Vice Mayor Cherrix** said there are ways around this. **Council Member Monahan** said when you go to the sites, you can see what is on the market. **Vice Mayor Cherrix** said that is a business and it was noted if you rent a house, it is a business. **Mayor Boies** said you trust that every citizen will go the right avenue. Neighbors can check out VRBO or AirBnB and see if it is on the market. What **Vice Mayor Cherrix** is stating is relevant to everything in the UDO in that it is your own property. **Vice Mayor Cherrix** said we have a lot of people who rent property in the town so will they have to go through the same standards that a STR will go through? **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said if we are going to get into a conversation over LTR vs. STR, we are expanding the discussion. Leases that are more than 30 days, the standard building codes would prevail. We are specifically talking about a transient occupancy type of facility. **Vice Mayor Cherrix** said if you are taxing STR, shouldn't we tax the LTR? **Mayor Boies** said we can look at LTR and see if it should be taxed differently.

**Council Member Massoud** would like to know the rules of LTR sooner rather than later. He said he has some problems with this.

**Council Member Reynolds** said the reason you see so many restrictions for STR is that it is still relatively new. People have been leasing LTR for a long time and there is precedence. For STR, there is no precedence. The Planning Commission pushed for ways to protect the renter and surrounding area. We wanted to cause the least amount of destruction in the communities so no one could take advantage of the STRs.

**Council Member Ricard** said it is a whole different ballgame when leasing a LTR. It is totally different on how a person treats their home and how they treat a weekend place.

**Vice Mayor Cherrix** asked if there is something different for hotels and **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said we do not have performance standards for these because of the difference of the residential districts vs. the commercial districts. Hotel and motels are built under different building standards. **Mayor Boies** said there are tougher standards for hotels and motels.

**Council Member Monahan** said this ordinance is very detailed and a lot of work was put into it. It was said we started this process because they are not allowed in town. **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said they saw what New Market was getting done so he and **former Town Manager Pearson** got the NSVRC on board to help with this. As research was done, they looked on the platforms and saw there were about five STRs within the town limits which is not many. The original thought was to bring them in legally. If they were being operated without it being an approved use, then make it an approved use.

**Council Member Monahan** asked if the zoning use districts has changed except for the commercial they will need a SUP. **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said it is by-right in the community commercial and highway commercial and by SUP in the other districts.

**Council Member Monahan** asked what standard will be brought before the Planning Commission and Town Council to say yes or no. **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said each will

have to be reviewed by their own standards. The performance standards will be the first and if they can't meet that, then it would be recommended to say no.

**Council Member Monahan** said if investors buy a house for a rental unit and then see how much they can make for renting it out per week, is there anything they can do if we find a lot of places are being used as a STR.

**P&Z Administrator Pambid** said Council could set a percentage or a set number. Applicants are told that if it is a discretionary application, they should not expect to get the SUP. The only type of application that you can expect to obtain is if it is by-right and then you still must meet certain standards.

**Council Member Hooser** said he would like to see more specific language so they can avoid why did you approve this one and not that one. He would like to see more restrictions as to where they are allowed. A person from Northern Virginia can pay more and then a local person cannot afford it and it is a transient person staying there. Discussion took place on the type of people that might be renting these and it was said some might be running from the law.

**Mayor Boies** thanked the Planning Commission for their work. A lot of work has gone into this. She asked if **Council Member Reynolds** if this has been thought about. **Council Member Reynolds** said putting a limit on the number of units has been interesting. She asked about it and the answer was always that they were not seeing a lot of interest in the STR in town and so they thought it was best to go with SUP. With the standards, you could give a permit if the standards are met, but when would it appear that there are too many? If we get too many, should the ordinance be changed?

**Council Member Nicholson** asked about the houses in the historic district. It is very specific as to what is by-right and SUP. **Council Member Nicholson** said Madison Heights has subdivision covenants and she isn't sure how that would fit in.

**P&Z Administrator Pambid** said if a home is in the historic district, but is in the commercial district, they could come in and do this by-right. Covenants are private and the town does not enforce these.

**Council Member Nicholson** said the HOA in Madison Heights became dysfunctional and it was turned over to the Town. **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said the Town is still not subject to the covenants of the subdivision.

**Council Member Weaver** said this would be a good time for the local HOA's to look at their covenants.

**Vice Mayor Cherrix** said if you specify 15 as the number, there is no change in the number and you get on a waiting list. You can cap it and the SUP is your license.

**Mayor Boies** asked if there were other localities that put caps on the number of units, but **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said they did not find any.

**Council Member Monahan** said **Council Member Nicholson** and **Council Member Weaver** brought up good ideas. In her HOA, they already have this prohibited, but they are private. What happens if someone writes a contract and gets approval of the town, and then the HOA would get complaints. Can you keep contact information on HOAs to help with this? **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said he believes in checklists, and this would be good. He does this with fences. He asks if they have applied to their HOA for approval.

**Mayor Boies** said we are to vote on this next week. Are we ready for this by next week? It sounds like adding a checklist isn't a big deal. If we add a number, would it have to go back to the Planning Commission? **Town Manager Coggsdale** doesn't think it would have to go back to the Planning Commission, but it could be a substantial change and another Public Hearing might have to be held.

**Council Member Nicholson** thinks the citizen comments need to be considered. **Mayor Boies** said she will make sure the staff gets the citizens the answers. She thanked **Kath Stanley** and **Tom Grant**, who are always booked at their STR, and bring tourists to the community. The first thing people do is look for STRs in quaint towns. People aren't coming in to rent because they are criminals on the move. We need to think about this practically. In regard to County and State laws, **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said whatever is the most stringent will prevail. Town regulations will prevail every time.

Some of the items awaiting information are:

- Checklist for Shenandoah County
- Compliance standards – how often are they inspected/checked
- Noise ordinance will be corrected.
- SUP and notifying adjacent property owners – State law requires this be sent to everybody within 500 feet.

**Kim Bishop** asked if anyone has talked with people in the community about this. She has concerns with this being in a neighborhood. What do people think of this being in their neighborhood?

**Mayor Boies** said there has been a lot of informational sessions or public engagement period. **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said it was advertised on social media and an ad in the newspaper. They did everything they could to get the word out. They did an online survey. Staff feels comfortable with the level of engagement and comments.

**Vice Mayor Cherrix** said he has not asked any of his neighbors.

**Mayor Boies** said if they are ready to vote next week or if they want to place a number on the units. She asked individual Council Members for their views.

**Council Member Weaver:** In answer to **Kim Bishop's** question, he has a group of people who he asks about agenda items. A robust tourism economy has hotels, BandB's, and STRs and so he thinks we need that. We are addressing something that is already happening. He would like a hard cap because he likes rules and regulations, but if we can get this through a SUP, he can go along with that. He can go along with how it is written. It is good enough.

**Council Member Ricard:** She is good with it. Every time someone moves out of their rentals, she says we have to clean. It is hard work to rent out property. It is a specific type of person who will do this. It will not be a problem.

**Council Member Reynolds:** Prepared to vote.

**Council Member Nicholson:** Prepared to vote

**Council Member Monahan:** Prepared to vote

**Council Member Massoud:** Cannot support this

**Council Member Hooser:** Would like certain amendments. He is in favor of STRs in downtown, but not in neighborhoods.

**Vice Mayor Cherrix:** Should not be in high density neighborhoods. Put a hard cap on the number to be allowed.

**Council Member Massoud** said he feels we are regulating something that should not be regulated, and he doesn't want to tax this.

**Mayor Boies** said finding out if Members are ready to vote is not set in stone as people can change their minds. She is not asking how they will vote, but if they are ready to vote.

**Council Member Monahan** asked **Council Member Reynolds** how comfortable she is with managing this through an SUP. **Council Member Reynolds** said she thinks it can be controlled with an SUP. She is not sure it is her preferred method, but she thinks it would work just fine. **Mayor Boies** said the reality of the real estate market should be kept in mind. If a person only wants property for a STR, they must go through the SUP process; this is not written to be business friendly for a person wanting to have a STR.

**Council Member Massoud** said he feels we are trying to impose rules when we don't have a problem.

## **2.) Lodging Tax Amendment for Short Term Rentals**

*Description: Consensus of the Finance and Personnel Committee to consider an amendment to the Town Code for taxes on the gross proceeds arising from short-term rental property.*

**Town Manager Coggsdale** said this is the taxation portion for the zoning just discussed. The Finance and Personnel Committee has reviewed a draft text amendment that would incorporate "Short Term Rentals" into the existing Transient Occupancy (Lodging) Tax ordinance. The committee recommended moving this to Council. Until the UDO Text Amendment is approved, taxation is irrelevant. If the text amendment is approved, a Public Hearing would need to be set on the Transient Occupancy Tax ordinance amendment. The draft ordinance is in the packet. There is no rush about this. It is an additional part of the STRs and Council can give direction to staff at the October 12, 2021, meeting if the text amendment is approved.

**Mayor Boies** said it was the consensus to move this to the Work Session.

**Vice Mayor Cherrix** asked if the tax would be the same as if a person were to stay in a hotel/motel and that was correct.

**Town Manager Coggsdale** said a public hearing would be needed so this will not be voted on next week.

**Council Member Massoud** said assuming this is to pass, how much does the town expect to receive. **Director of Finance Fletcher** said she has not done any projections on how much they are expecting to receive.

## **3.) Employee Personnel Policies Manual – Holiday Schedule Review**

*Description: Recommendation from the Finance and Personnel Committee to add Veteran's Day to the Town's list of holidays.*

**Town Manager Coggsdale** said this was reviewed at the Finance and Personnel Committee and the committee recommended Veterans Day be added to the list of observed holidays.

**Mayor Boies** said a chart was given on what other localities do. A list of holidays and floater days was shown.

**Council Member Reynolds** said she would be remiss if she did not say she was disappointed in Juneteenth not being added, but she will be supporting the proposed calendar.

**Vice Mayor Cherrix** said he is in favor of Veterans Day, but it had previously been discussed to take away a floater day for a holiday when Juneteenth was discussed. **Interim Town Manager McKinley** said he thought most would like to have the floater day over a holiday. He felt he should bring this up in this discussion since it is a holiday.

**Mayor Boies** said we are not taking away a floater day, but adding another holiday.

**Council Member Massoud** said Veterans Day is a very solemn day for most. It is a day to reflect for what we have as far as our freedom. He understands we are adding a small burden to the taxpayer, but he feels most people feel very strongly about Veterans Day and he supports this. He sympathizes with **Council Member Reynolds** and we do need to do something in our country to honor freed slaves. He said maybe we should have something every year for Juneteenth.

**Town Manager Coggsdale** said the State adds more days to its calendar depending on the Governor's discretion.

**Council Member Ricard** said her dad served for 32 years and she asked him what he thought of this, and he said it will just be another day off. She thinks it will be forgotten if it is a day off. If people work, something could be done to remind them of what Veterans Day is.

**Council Member Monahan** said she used to work on Veterans Day and now she has the day off by her choice. She can raise her child to respect the day. We will always get those who don't get it.

**Council Member Weaver** said he is on the committee which advanced it now.

**Mayor Boies** said it appears Council will have enough support to move it forward.

**Vice Mayor Cherrix** said he is with **Council Member Ricard**. He has never had Veterans Day off. Independence Day feels like that already. There are special things we can do. Unless you are military oriented, it is just a day off.

#### **4.) Northern Shenandoah Business Park/Economic Development**

*Description: Follow up to the September 7<sup>th</sup> IDA/County ED presentation.*

**Town Manager Coggsdale** said this has come from the September 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. There are two plans that deal with the development of the park. The Shenandoah County Economic Plan Update and the Camoin Plan provide guidance and insight on the park as well as initiatives between the County and Town.

What direction do we want to move forward?

**Council Member Massoud** said that the last debate we had was a tough issue. Whatever the vote, each felt they were doing the best thing for the town. The vote helped re-enforce that this town is



not business friendly. We need to be talking about bringing jobs in here and we need to understand that a blue-collar job is just as important as a white collar job.

**Mayor Boies** said this has been on her mind since the second vote. The perception of turning down two businesses was a communication issue. We need to keep working on open communication. We need to continue having the conversations, so we know better where we are. She thinks we all want the same thing. We were painted as anti-blue collar and that is absolutely wrong. Her message to the IDA is that we need to be on the same page. We want to embrace economic development.

**Council Member Nicholson** would like to talk about an industrial park and a business park. We are getting it confused. Which do we want? She thinks of a business park as banking, computers, etc.. An Industrial Park is industrial.

**Town Manager Coggsdale** said **Council Member Nicholson** makes a good point. Both terms apply to that park. He doesn't know how important the name is. The key thing is Council knowing what they would like to see out there. This is the communication that needs to be heard.

**Council Member Nicholson** said the vote at the last time, we entertained a change to the UDO that would affect the entire town. She would like to not vote on the business and the UDO on the same night. It makes us look like we aren't business friendly. **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said the last cycle was to only amend the UDO to allow for a specific purpose. The applicant had a specific piece of property in mind, but Town Council should not have been considering a specific site. The ordinance amendment was not about the specific site and was only on the zoning amendment.

**Mayor Boies** said we need to focus on only one thing, the organization structure.

**Council Member Monahan** said before we look at anything else, can we get the property downtown taken out of this zoning district? **Town Manager Coggsdale** said it is business park/light industrial. An overlay district or a separate district can be made. You would not have to deal with downtown. **Consensus was to make this change.** **Town Manager Coggsdale** said there will be some additional conversations on what they will want in the district. They need to be specific on what they want in the park.

**Council Member Monahan** said she and **Council Member Reynolds** discussed this. She listened to the Planning Commission that said industry needs to go to the back of the park and business near the front. She does not know about this. The first vote was for storage units, and this was not bringing in much tax money. In talking with the IDA, she would love if they would come to the Town Manager and get the feeling on how Council will react to the proposed business.

**Mayor Boies** said not all requests are coming from the IDA as there are private property owners out there.

**Council Member Nicholson** said her vote will be by the people and not how she might individually feel.

**Council Member Monahan** said **Council Member Nicholson** already knows how people feel.

**Council Member Reynolds** said she agrees with the things that have been said about the identity of the park. We have an asphalt plant and a call center. She was reading a document in the packet

about being flexible in the selection of businesses. Lots of things go into making decisions. There are a lot of moving parts, and this makes the decision making difficult. Manufacturing is what she would like to see in the park. This could strike a balance between industrial and business. Some of the studies and recommendations lists improving quality of life and she thinks Strasburg has done a great job with that. We have budgeted for the road, and we are checking off a lot of things. We are not doing so well in site readiness, but it is on Council's mind. The marketability is what suffers out there. Are we able to market ourselves as both?

**Council Member Weaver** said we need to keep in mind that when we refer to plans, there is no good plan that is not adaptable. Plans that can't be changed to changing conditions, is not a good plan. We need to adapt.

**Vice Mayor Cherrix** doesn't think the name is going to stop anybody. It must get out there that the space is there. We can't make the private owners make their land site ready. If we don't start putting things in there, it will keep getting looked over. We have to adapt to a plan or make it fit.

**Mayor Boies** said all agree. We want to produce jobs and provide a tax base. Do we want a threshold for the number of jobs we want? **Vice Mayor Cherrix** said it is not the size of the business, but what they are doing.

**Council Member Massoud** said with the Camoin Plan, we invested in bringing in the most jobs we can. He is not sure what the right number is as far as the number of jobs. Many are confused with the issue of zoning. He was planning to vote against the by-right change as he thought it was a by-right change for the entire town so he was afraid there would be a truck repair place beside Food Lion and he was surprised that it was not for the entire town.

**Mayor Boies** said communication is key. Being clear on what the ordinance should say is important. She likes the thorough packets that are being sent out. We want jobs, tax revenue, and the park filled up. We are not saying white collar or blue collar.

**Vice Mayor Cherrix** said a lot of it is that it doesn't matter what it is as long as it has an impact on the town.

**Town Manager Coggsdale** said we will work on an ordinance for the park only. Other areas can be added later, if so wanted.

**Town Manager Coggsdale** said communication with economic development is going to rise substantially. Council is the decision makers so they have to be informed. You might not know the names of companies. Jobs and the sector they are in is what Council should know about. Working with the County to make sure we are being considered is his commitment to Council.

#### **Old or Unfinished Business:**

**Vice Mayor Cherrix** asked about trash service. **Town Manager Coggsdale** said he will send out a formal memo about the meeting that he and **Director of Public Works McKinley** had with Waste Management. If people report to Council that they are picking up trash before 6 a.m., let staff know. They had a good discussion. The problem around Labor Day was a communication issue. When the bids went out, we only had one bid. We will continue working on this, and it will be explored if there are other options. The trash truck must be at the scales of the landfill by 3:30 p.m. because it closes at 4 p.m.

Waste Management is a huge company, but where we are serviced from has only one truck. They are a small company under a large umbrella.

**New Business:**

Town Staff is looking into some water issues from the storm on Monday night. Clean-up is ongoing. The telephones and internet were out today at all town facilities. Phones and internet were out today.

**Mayor Boies** reported that representatives of the Strasburg Express will be coming to the Council meeting next week so people could wear purple in support of the team.

**Council Member Nicholson** said, “Recently, Strasburg High School contacted the town in order to do a Homecoming Parade. Different leadership did not understand the process; this parade has not been done for two years because of the pandemic. They were told there wasn’t enough time; that there needed to be at least 60 days and two Council meetings in order to get it approved. The last 18 months have been very difficult on all of us, especially our youth. They have had to endure ZOOM meetings, making classrooms out of the dining room table or wherever they could. Also, they had to deal with shoddy internet service. All this stress in order to keep their grades and stay up on their studies. For 18 months, it was even tough for us as adults. I remember some of them had to figure this all out on their own because they may not have had an adult to help them maneuver this because they had to work during the pandemic.

Fast forward to 2021. A special time known as Homecoming to celebrate the Fall; celebrate our school, only to be shot down by bureaucratic red-tape. Couldn’t we have done a better job of representing our town? They said that we failed to complete the process. Alternatives were given, but we still could have had a teaching moment for the youth of the town, and we failed. Yes, VDOT may not have given a permit, but we could have at least tried. They were told that they could fill out a 25 page form, but Council would probably not approve it, or you could come plead your case, but Council would probably not approve it. I know alternatives were offered, but this was a student plan. We had an opportunity to teach our youth that local government is not the bad guy and that we are not just like our national government. We had just sat in a meeting not two weeks before that and said that process is not how we intended it to be. A small hometown homecoming parade is not out of the question, or it shouldn’t be, at least. I hope the next time we do a better job for our youth and send a better message that we want to work with the schools; that in good faith, we want to be cooperative; and send a message that we want to work with them and be helpful and supportive. And, don’t ever, ever assume what my vote is going to be.”

**Mayor Boies** asked if **Council Member Nicholson** had received the parade clarification that would have answered many of these questions. She met with staff and the school representative. They wanted to block off King Street. They were given the option of having a convoy through town. Staff gave alternatives. They were given the option to come down Holliday Street. A meeting was held with school staff, but Ms. Mason, the teacher who was coordinating this, was not able to attend the meeting, but another teacher took her place so Mayor Boies is not sure if the information was gotten back to Ms. Mason correctly. Mayor Boies does not feel it was a staff issue. It was a communication issue. Homecoming was put off until next week and she is willing to help with getting a convoy organized. We can make this happen. The community is supporting this.

**Town Manager Coggsdale** said he can take an active role and reach out to the school and discuss the alternatives.

**P&Z Administrator Pambid** said those words that Council Member Nicholson quoted were not said. We really wanted to work with the school, but giving staff two weeks was not workable. We can’t go to VDOT two weeks in advance and ask for Route 11 to be closed. Council Member Nicholson asked if something could be done on a yearly basis for events like this. **P&Z Administrator Pambid** said there should be a standard operating document so we can work with

the school for this. There was little information forthcoming from the school. **Town Manager Coggsdale** added that until there is a date, we really can't do anything so the school would need to notify the Town as soon as a date is chosen for Homecoming.

**Mayor Boies** said in the past there was a parade that went down Holliday Street and turned around and went back to the high school. She told them there were rules if they wanted King Street blocked off. She hopes we can compromise with the school.

**Being no further business, the work session adjourned at 9:15 p.m.**